

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2018

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) was held on October 17, 2018, at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, 18900 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Triangle, VA.

Members Present

- Tom Wozniak, Air Force Association
- Rick Oertel, American Legion
- John Cooper, AMVETS
- Denice Williams, Disabled American Veterans
- Ken Shelton, Fifth Baptist Veterans' Ministry
- William Ashton, Fleet Reserve Association
- Lauren Augustine, Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)
- John Clickener, Marine Corps League
- Frank Wickersham, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
- Craig Cressman, Navy Mutual Aid Association
- Preston Curry, Paralyzed Veterans of America
- David Sitler, Reserve Officers Association
- Perry Taylor, Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
- Dan Boyer, Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Charles Montgomery, Vietnam Veterans of America
- Robert Barnette, Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association
- Kevin Hoffman, Virginia National Guard Association
- Michael Dick, Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans Services
- Al Pianalto, Vice Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation
- Commissioner John L. Newby II, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)

Alternate Members Present (representing their VSO)

- Robert Sempek, Association of the United States Army
- Mark Atchison, Military Order of the Purple Heart

Members Absent

- Michael Flanagan, Association of the United States Army
- Tim Whitmore, Korean War Veterans Association
- Robert Herbert, Legion of Valor
- Jim Cuthbertson, Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Glenn Rodriguez, Navy Seabee Veterans of America
- Jon Ostrowski, Non Commissioned Officers Association
- Judy Reid, Women Marines Association

Alternate Members Present (not representing their VSO)

- James Merchant, Air Force Association
- Rich Anderson, MOAA

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Jaime Areizaga-Soto
- Steven Combs, DVS
- Carrie Ann Alford, DVS
- Donna Harrison, DVS
- Brittany Jones, DVS
- Gen. Walt Mercer (Ret.), Virginia National Guard
- Cassy Horn, Virginia National Guard
- Dr. Niyanti Dhokai, George Mason University
- Shamala Capizzi, George Mason University

Others Present

- Debby Burroughs, Senator Tim Kaine
- Maggie Wickersham, MOAA
- Trish Capps, MOAA
- Dave Rose, AMVETS
- Michelle Ramos Domingue, Navy Mutual Aid Association

Items included in the Agenda Packet

Agenda

July 25, 2018 meeting minutes (Agenda Item III)

Reports (Agenda Item IV)

- Board of Veterans Services
- Veterans Services Foundation
- Virginia War Memorial Board

Update from Commissioner Newby (Agenda Item VIa)

Call for Appointed Officers handout (Agenda Item VIIa)

Proposed Position Papers voted on July 25, for 2019 JLC Initiatives (Agenda Item VIIb)

The meeting agenda is included as *Attachment 1*.

Opening, Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation

Chairman Frank Wickersham, called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m., and led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

In the absence of Chaplain L. T. “Tim” Whitmore, Vice Chair Ace Taylor delivered a short opening prayer.

Roll Call of VSOs, Quorum Determination, and Introduction of New VSO, Guests

The roll was called, and 19 of the 25 Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) represented on the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) were recorded as being represented. A quorum was determined. Mr. Michael Dick, Vice Chairman of the Board of

Veterans Services (BVS) attending on behalf of Chairman Jim Icenhour; Mr. Al Pianalto, Vice Chairman of the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) attending on behalf of Frank Finelli, Chairman; and DVS Commissioner John L. Newby II were recorded as present.

Chairman Wickersham asked the guests to introduce themselves. The names and organizations of the guests are recorded above. Chairman Wickersham welcomed them to the meeting.

Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Wickersham opened the meeting with a **motion, seconded** by John Clickener, to approve the agenda. The motion carried **unanimously**. (*Attachment 1*)

Approval of the July 25, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Dan Boyer made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Mark Atchison, to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2018 meeting. The motion carried **unanimously**.

Reports

Board of Veterans Services

Board of Veterans Services (BVS) Vice Chairman Michael Dick gave the BVS report as listed in the attachment and added that BVS has formed three working groups: one to study benefits, led by Carl Bedell, one to study veterans and the arts led by Julie Waters, and one to study education, led by himself. Also, BVS's point of contact for veterans in the arts, Ms. Julie Waters, has been keeping in touch with GMU's Veterans Arts Initiative (staff in attendance, see guest list above) and mentioned their guitar group will be playing on Sunday, October 22 at the War Memorial and that Dr. Dhokai would give a more detailed report during the public comment. (*Attachment 2*)

Veterans Services Foundation

Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Vice Chairman Al Pianalto gave the VSF report as listed in the attachment and added that VSF members attended the Veterans in the Vineyard event and it was very successful with one donation received so far and one lady interested in donating her property. He stated that donations were down and fundraising was now the top priority of the VSF. (*Attachment 3*)

Virginia Military Advisory Council

In Mr. Bill Barrett's absence, Deputy Secretary Jaime Areizaga-Soto gave a short report from the Virginia Military Advisory Council. He stated that recently several installations have had commanders transition and they are looking forward to meeting the new commanders at the next VMAC meeting on Nov. 14 at 1300 hours.

Virginia War Memorial Board

Ms. Alford shared that Ms. Juliano was in a bad car accident and was unable to attend the meeting but had submitted a written report. She highlighted that the new *Virginians at War* film about Afghanistan and Iraq had its premiere and was well received and War Memorial Director Clay Mountcastle expects the DVDs to be ready soon. There was also a discussion, led by Delegate Fowler and Senator McPike about the board's mission coming to a close with

the construction project completion in 2019 and the board will sunset on January 1, 2020 and oversight duties transferred to the Board of Veterans Services. (*Attachment 4*)

Report from the Virginia National Guard

General Walt Mercer, (Ret.) in the absence of General Tim Williams, gave a brief report on the National Guard. He mentioned that the Guard has been busy with post-hurricane support. 1,550 guardsmen were activated for response to Hurricane Florence, including about 45 to NC to support them as EMAC. Soldiers were out in support in Danville and Southside Virginia for Hurricane Michael.

91st Cyber BDE MILCON facility HQ Groundbreaking at Ft. Belvoir will be on 14 November.

529th CSSB deploying to Central Command Area on 25 Nov for approximately 1 year and the 169th MEDEVAC DET (AVN) will redeploy in the next 30-45 days from year deployment to Kosovo.

The 192nd fighter wing has been stepped up to a wing unit, which means more multi-dimensional responsibilities, and the 185th Air National Guard Cyber Squadron continues to make good progress on becoming fully mission capable is working toward becoming fully functional.

And, he mentioned that the Guard officially transitioned under the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs in September. There being no questions, Chairman Wickersham thanked General Mercer for the report.

Report from DVS Commissioner John Newby

Commissioner Newby thanked the JLC for their continued support. He mentioned the Pentagon office ribbon-cutting and grand opening on October 29. The office has been open for a weeks and is already the most busy office with appointments booking five weeks out. He mentioned the War Memorial expansion project is on track for a grand opening on or near Patriot's Day, September 11, 2019. He mentioned the ceremony at the Suffolk cemetery last Wednesday for the largest VA grant ever given for a cemetery. Horton Memorial cemetery in Suffolk received \$10.2M for expansion and Governor Northam and Mr. Ron Walters, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary (#2 at National Cemetery Administration) attended the ceremony. It are the busiest of the three cemeteries with over 1,100 people buried there each year. He mentioned the VA matching funding for the two new Care Centers. And finally, he mentioned the Mayor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide with Richmond being one of the participating cities and DVS and Secretary Hopkins have been involved in the Richmond challenge. SAMSA and the VA sent letters to 10 states for a Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide and Virginia was one of the 10 states. Five will be chosen to participate.

Deputy Secretary Areizaga-Soto mentioned that Governor Northam signed a letter yesterday asking to be part of the challenge.

A detailed report was given to the members and is included as *Attachment 5*.

Presentation on DVS Programs for Justice Involved Veterans

Ms. Donna Harrison, Criminal Justice Coordinator, gave an overview of the Justice Involved Veterans program, which is part of the Virginia Veterans and Family Support (VVFS) service

line. She thanked the JLC members for all their support over the past several years with Veterans Treatment Dockets.

After her presentation she took questions and Gen. Mercer asked what was the number 1 success of the program so far. Commissioner Newby jumped in and said “this lady right here! We stole her from VADOC.” He added that VADOC has been a great partner and that jails were the next frontier for the program. The presentation was distributed to the members via email after the meeting.

New Business

Call for JLC Appointed Officers for 2019-2020

Chairman Wickersham asked for volunteers for the appointed officer positions for the coming year. Members can self-nominate or nominate their alternate or another member. Names need to be emailed to the chair, and copy Ms. Alford as soon as possible. The final list will be distributed at the December meeting. (*Attachment 6*)

Review All Proposed 2019 JLC Initiatives

Chairman Wickersham asked each sponsor to review their policy initiative. Technical edits that did not affect the policy were made to two of the policy papers. The policy paper “Phased-in System for Partial State Tax Exemption for Military Retirement Income” had been edited since the July 25th meeting and those changes were reviewed and approved unanimously. The policy paper “Electronic Ballot Return by Overseas Military” had been edited since the July 25th meeting and those changes were reviewed and approved unanimously. No questions were asked of any of the sponsors.

Prioritize All 2019 JLC Initiatives

Mr. Dave Sitler, legislative chair, explained the system for prioritizing the policy initiatives. He will read the names of the papers in the order they are shown in the agenda packet and each member will vote on which paper they think should be the number 1 priority. Then they will go through for 2nd, 3rd and so on. One vote per round.

Mr. Bill Ashton asked about the budget and if it can be amended mid-cycle. Ms. Alford said that while the General Assembly is reluctant to amend the biennial budget mid-cycle, they will “tweak” it and legislators will put in many budget amendments for “course corrections.”

Mr. Boyer asked the group “what is more important that the disenfranchisement of combat military personnel and their votes?”

Mr. Montgomery asked that the two disabled veterans initiatives be priorities number 1 and 2.

Mr. Hoffman, a new member, asked for clarification of the rankings. Chairman Wickersham explained that the JLC always prioritizes the list to show the General Assembly what the top priority is for that year.

Mr. Tom Wozniak asked for a few minutes to review all the papers. Chairman Wickersham gave the JLC members 5 minutes to review the papers before voting.

Ms. Lauren Augustine had to step out to take a call and gave her vote counts to Ms. Alford.

After 5 minutes of review, Mr. Sitler began the process with Ms. Alford assisting in counting hands raised and recording the vote totals. The process was repeated with the number two priority and the number 3 priority and then Mr. Sitler asked if everyone was in agreement that the 2nd and 3rd place papers that round should be numbered number 4 and 5. The members agreed unanimously. There was another round of voting for number 6 and therefore the last paper was given the number 7.

Mr. Sitler asked Ms. Alford to read through the results. The chairman made a **motion, seconded** Mr. Dan Boyer to approve the list. The motion passed **unanimously**. The prioritized list and copies of all of 2019 Policy Initiatives is *Attachment 7*

Discussion of JLC Day & Reception during 2019 Session

Chairman Wickersham asked Ms. Alford to speak about JLC Day.

She said that the JLC Conference Day at the General Assembly is an annual tradition that was missed last year with the migration to the new, temporary GAB in the Pocahontas Building. This year there will be a JLC day again, but it will look like all the other groups – we still will not be able to reserve a room and have legislators come to us. She stated that she had a good conversation with the Chair about this and they thought January 16 would be the best day. It is still the beginning of Session, it is the day of the first General Assembly Military & Veterans Caucus meeting, and she laid out this timeline:

JLC members gather on Wednesday, January 16 at **0700** at Meriweather's café on the 3rd floor of the SunTrust building on Main St., across from the Pocahontas building. Members will sign in and confirm their legislative appointments.

At **0740** walk as a group across the street and go through security and up to the General Assembly Military & Veterans Caucus meeting, which begins at **0800**. It can take awhile to get through security.

After the caucus meeting JLC members will fan out to pre-scheduled appointments.

At **1130**, members who wish to visit the Capitol galleries will gather at the Bank St. entrance and LAs will walk you to the Capitol and up to the House and Senate Chamber Galleries – as in previous years, we'll divide up into two groups. Session begins at noon and visitors need to be in their seats beforehand. Senator Reeves and Delegate Freitas, Co-Chairs of the GAMVC, will introduce the groups from the floor.

Lunch will be on your own. Schedule afternoon appointments with the 19 Delegates who are still new – this is a great opportunity to educate on who the JLC is and what you do!

There was then discussion about an evening reception, as in past years. She is happy to help with logistics, but DVS will not be paying for the reception, so the member VSOs will have to chip in to cover costs.

Mr. Hoffman with the Virginia National Guard Association stated that the Guard is having their reception the night of January 16 at the Library of Virginia and the JLC is welcome to attend

their reception.

Chairman Wickersham asked for a motion. Mr. Boyer made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Ashton to approve the January 16th date for JLC day and to have everyone attend the Guard reception that evening. The motion passed unanimously.

Other New Business and Open Discussion

Bill Ashton asked about how information about the JLC is distributed to members in the other VSOs. Mr. Charlie Montgomery, Vietnam Veterans of America rep.; Mr. John Clickener, Marine Corps League rep.; Mr. Dan Boyer, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Chairman Frank Wickersham, Military Officers Association of America all explained how they share information with their VSOs.

Ms. Alford also stated that when she gives presentations at town halls she has two slides explaining what JLC is, and one with all the member VSOs listed and encourages veterans to be active in groups they are a member of and to ask about the JLC and to pass their ideas up the chain as well.

Mark Atchison showed the members the new map of the “Purple Heart State” signage placed around the state that MOPH worked on with Senator Norment and VDOT. *Attachment 9*

Public Comment

Dr. Niyanti Dhokai gave a brief Report on Veterans and the Arts Initiative programs for Veterans, Servicemembers, and their families. She mentioned that she had given a presentation to the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus and the Arts Caucus joint meeting during Session this year. The Veterans and the Arts Initiative, based at George Mason University’s Hylton Performing Arts Center, provides lasting connections to the arts and supports community engagement for a diverse range of community members from World War II era Veterans through Servicemembers and their young families. These programs have been provided free of cost through philanthropic support from Amazon Web Services, Dominion Energy, Azalea Charities, and other organizations. This year, the Veterans and the Arts Initiative’s workshops have doubled in capacity and have provided opportunities in guitar playing, visual art, and poetry, as well as a songwriting series specifically for military children. The Initiative is honored to be presenting a guitar workshop at the Virginia War Memorial on October 21 at 2 PM as part of artoberVA.

Furthermore, she said, George Mason University faculty co-created and co-taught their first graduate-level course on Arts, Health, and the Military in the Summer of 2018. Finally, she said she will be part of a symposium with on music interventions at 70th Annual Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, and the Arts Initiative is actively supporting the Commonwealth of Virginia’s efforts towards Creative Forces: Military Healing Arts Network, a collaboration between the NEA, the VA, the DoD, and state arts agencies to support military patients and Veterans with traumatic brain injury and psychological health conditions. To support their efforts to serve Veterans and Servicemembers in the Commonwealth, she said George Mason University will be seeking a \$150,000 budget amendment in the upcoming legislative session to match private sector contributions.

Handouts were distributed and are *Attachment 8*

Closing Remarks

Chairman Wickersham reminded the members that the next meeting will be held December 19th at the RTD Hanover Plant. Ms. Alford said she would send out detailed directions ahead of the next meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 1
Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
National Museum of the Marine Corps
Regimental Board Room
18900 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Triangle, VA
October 17, 2018
10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

REVISED PROPOSED AGENDA

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Frank Wickersham, Chairman* (10:00-10:05)
- II. Opening Prayer & Thoughts, *Tim Whitmore* (10:05-10:10)
- III. Roll call of VSOs, quorum determination, welcome new appointees and introduction of guests –
Frank Wickersham, Chairman (10:10 – 10:20)
- IV. Approval of Agenda and July 25 meeting minutes – *Frank Wickersham, Chairman* (10:20-10:25)
- V. Reports (10:25 – 10:55)
 - a. Board of Veterans Services – ~~*Jim Icenhour*~~, *Michael Dick, BVS Vice Chairman*
 - b. Veterans Services Foundation – ~~*Frank Finelli*~~, *Al Pianalto, VSF Vice Chairman*
 - c. VMAC, *Bill Barrett*
 - d. Virginia War Memorial Board, *Marie Juliano*
 - e. Virginia National Guard, ~~*General Timothy Williams*~~, *Walter Mercer, Chief of Staff*
- VI. Department of Veterans Services (10:55-11:45)
 - a. Update on Construction projects and new offices, *Commissioner John Newby*
 - b. New Programs for Justice Involved Veterans – *Donna Harrison, Criminal Justice Coordinator*
- VII. New Business (11:45 – 12:35)
 - a. Call for JLC Appointed Officers for 2019-2020, *Frank Wickersham*
 - b. Review and prioritize 2019 JLC Initiatives, *Dave Sitler*
 - c. Discussion about JLC Day/Reception during 2019 Session, *Frank Wickersham & Carrie Ann Alford*
 - d. Other new business and open discussion, *Frank Wickersham*
- VIII. Public comment period (12:35 – 12:40)
- IX. Closing remarks and prepare for next meeting, December 19 – *Frank Wickersham, Chairman*
(12:40 – 12:45)
- X. Adjourn (12:45)

Lunch to follow on-site and then tour of the museum at 1400

ATTACHMENT 2
**REPORT TO THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE
ORGANIZATIONS (JLC)**
October 17, 2018

The Board of Veterans Services (BVS) has met once since the July 25th meeting of the JLC. The BVS met last on September 6, 2018 at the DVS Office in Henrico, VA.

At our September meeting we greeted new members Carl Bess and Delegate Gordon Helsel (HD-91). In addition, Commissioner John Newby presented Del. Helsel with a 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War pin to honor his service.

We received a report from Donna Harrison, DVS Criminal Justice Coordinator on VVFS programs to assist justice involved veterans, and an update on Virginia's efforts to functionally end veterans homelessness from Matt Leslie, VVFS Assistant Director.

At the meeting I was elected to a second term as chairman and Mike Dick was elected to a second term as vice chairman. We look forward to continuing to serve the board and Virginia's veterans.

The BVS consists of twenty-two members: fourteen citizen members, five legislators, and three *ex officio* members. Board members are in regular contact with the Department of Veterans Services to provide policy input on key operational issues.

Our next meeting will be at the DVS Henrico office on Thursday, September 6 at 10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Icenhour
Chairman

ATTACHMENT 3
VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION REPORT
To The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
October 17, 2018

The Veterans Services Foundation Board of Trustees has held one Board meeting since the last Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations meeting on July 25, 2018. The Veterans Services Foundation met on August 9, 2018 at the Eastern Henrico Work Force Center in Henrico County. The Development and Finance Committees also met prior to the August 9th Board meeting.

At the August 9th meeting, the newly elected Chair, Frank Finelli, appointed Walter Stosch as Chair and Matice Wright as Vice Chair of the Finance Committee. Nicole Carry was appointed Chair of the Development Committee and John Lesinski as Vice Chair. The board unanimously approved each appointment. A new Procedures and Policies Committee was approved by the board. Work to update the Foundation's by-laws and policies will begin immediately, in addition to updating the Foundation's Memorandum of Understanding with DVS. The Chair and Vice Chair appointments for the new committee will be made by the Chairman and announced as soon as the member's names have been confirmed.

Fundraising will continue to be a top priority for the Foundation. All members of the board continue to work on the proposed fundraising plan implemented by the Development Committee. Each member has received informational marketing materials that can be used when contacting past donors and any potential donors. All are encouraged to set up VSF presentations with organizations in their area. VSF has made many commitments to host tables at upcoming event throughout the Commonwealth.

The Foundation closed the 2018 Fiscal Year with a total of \$545,202.15 in donations with expenditures at \$478,323.75. In an income/expenditure comparison, spanning from 2015 to 2018, it was shown that donations are down and that expenditures are starting to increase. Virginia Veterans and Family Support (VVFS) remains the largest program supported by the Foundation. VVFS provides numerous direct services to Veterans and their families along with support for the Homeless program.

The next Veterans Services Foundation Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for November 8, 2018 at the American Legion Department Headquarters, Richmond.

Respectfully Submitted,
Frank Finelli
Chairman
Veterans Services Foundation

ATTACHMENT 4
Report of the Virginia War Memorial Board meeting to the JLC
Marie Juliano

At the September 21 meeting of the Virginia War Memorial Board, the new legislative members were introduced and welcomed. They are: Del. Ingram, Del. McGuire, Del. Thomas and Del. Bell (not in attendance).

Dr. Clay Mountcastle announced that the premiere of the new *Virginians at War* film was on Sept. 11th at the War Memorial and there was a second screening up in Northern Virginia and it has been well received. He anticipates it being widely available soon.

Delegate Buddy Fowler and Senator McPike led a discussion about the future of the War Memorial Board with the completion of the current expansion project in 2019 that concludes a 20-year construction project to refurbish, then to expand, and expand again, the Virginia War Memorial, turning it into a Richmond landmark and educational asset for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

They recommended that the VWMB:

- Transfer the advisory responsibilities of the VWMB to the Board of Veterans Services (BVS), which performs policy and advisory oversight of all the DVS service sections: Benefits, Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS), Care Centers, Cemeteries, and Veterans Education, Transition, and Employment (VETE) and War Memorial;
- Be “sunsetted” effective January 1, 2020. This date is after completion of the VWM expansion in 2019, and, therefore, the completion of the 20-year construction project;

And vote to support the following resolution:

The Virginia War Memorial Board established as an advisory board within the meaning of § [2.2-2100](#) for the purpose of supporting the Virginia War Memorial, has completed its mission of oversight through the transition from independent entity to incorporation into the Department of Veterans Services; and through two construction projects. The Virginia War Memorial’s mission will be assumed by the Virginia Board of Veterans Services beginning January 1, 2020.

And, support the BVS expanding by three members (1 senator, 1 delegate, 1 citizen) to ensure BVS has the membership needed to continue robust support to and oversight of the Virginia War Memorial.

The board voted unanimously to support the resolution and will work with Carrie Ann Alford, DVS policy director and War Memorial staff through the next year to ensure the smooth transition of oversight and any relevant documents to the BVS.

ATTACHMENT 5



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

John L. Newby II
Commissioner

Telephone: (804) 786-0220
Fax: (804) 786-0302

To: Chairman Frank Wickersham and the members of the Joint Leadership Council
From: John L. Newby II, Commissioner
Subject: DVS Report – update on office openings and capital projects

Date: October 17, 2018

With the opening of the new Pentagon office in August, DVS now has 31 Benefits Services Offices in operation! There will be a formal opening ceremony for the Pentagon office on October 29 – check your e-mail for the invitation. New offices will open by the end of the fiscal year on Fort Belvoir and in Virginia Beach (Oceana area). As soon as new staff are hired and trained, DVS will convert the Fort Lee itinerate service location into a full-time operation. Finally, we continue to monitor the potential construction of a new U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) community-based outpatient clinic in the Richmond/Short Pump area. When that happens, we plan to co-locate a Benefits office there. No date is set for this, however. It should be noted that Benefits Services and the Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program are co-located in 18 of the 31 locations (19 of 32 following the opening of Virginia Beach/Oceana).

The Virginia War Memorial expansion project continues apace, with a target completion date of September 2019. Please join us for the Commonwealth's Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11 in Richmond's Byrd Park. The ceremony will be held in Dogwood Dell, which is adjacent to the Carillon, Virginia's World War I memorial. Following the ceremony, the Virginia WWI and WWII Commemoration Commission will be holding special events and exhibits at the Carillon to mark the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice.

DVS has received a \$10.2M grant from the VA for the next phase of expansion at the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk. The project will add over 7,000 additional in-ground full-casketed burial spaces, expand the Administration Building, and add an emergency generator. In addition, DVS has submitted a request for VA grant funding for the phase of expansion of the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia – this request is pending.

We have been notified by the VA that the two new veterans care center projects (128 beds each in Virginia Beach and Vint Hill) will receive VA grant funding in the spring (\$33M for Virginia Beach, \$34M for Vint Hill). DVS has also submitted a VA grant request to replace the emergency generator at the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center in Richmond – this request is pending.

ATTACHMENT 6

JLC ELECTED OFFICERS:

- Chairman: Frank Wickersham
- Vice Chairman: Perry “Ace” Taylor

JLC APPOINTED OFFICERS:

- Legislative Officer:
- Assistant Legislative Officer:
- Chaplain:
- Constitution & By-Laws Committee
 - Chairman:
 - Members (2):
- Nominating Committee
 - Chairman:
 - Members (2):
- JLC Rep to the Virginia Military Advisory Council (VMAC)
 - Primary:
 - Alternate:
- JLC Rep to the State Board of Elections (SBE)
 - Primary:
 - Alternate:
- JLC Rep to Board of Veteran Services (BVS)
 - Primary: Chair
 - Alternate:
- JLC Rep to Veterans Services Foundation (VSF)
 - Primary: Chair
 - Alternate:
- JLC Rep to the Virginia War Memorial Board (VWMB)
 - Primary: Chair
 - Alternate:
- JLC Reps to Veterans Treatment Dockets in Hampton, Fairfax, Prince William, Spotsylvania
 - Primary:
 - Alternate:

ATTACHMENT 7
Summary of 2019 JLC Policy Initiatives

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
JLC 2019-01 Increased State Active Duty (SAD) Pay	That the Governor and General Assembly appropriate \$50,000 to ensure that all Virginia National Guardsmen are paid at least at the E6 rate.
JLC 2019-02 <i>Income Tax Subtraction for Certain Low-Income 100% Disabled Veterans</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly approve an individual income tax subtraction for 100% service-connected disabled veterans with a federally adjusted gross income, not exceeding 150% of the federal poverty level for a four-person household, who have not already claimed another exemption.
JLC 2019-03 <i>Electronic Ballot Return</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly enact legislation and provide budget support of a pilot program at the Virginia State Board of Elections for \$100,000 and funding for one FTE, for a limited pilot program for the electronic return of absentee ballots by Virginia's deployed military service members.
JLC 2019-04 Personal Property Tax Relief for Certain Disabled Veterans	That the Governor and General Assembly approve legislation creating a standardized, statewide personal property tax exemption for one vehicle for 100% service-connected, total and permanent disabled veterans.
JLC 2019-05 Free Tuition for Virginia National Guardsmen	That the Governor and General Assembly provide budget support of approximately a \$1 million increase in the annual State Tuition Assistance program for a pilot program to cover the estimated 3.5% of Guardsmen seeking a degree who are not currently completely covered by federal and state tuition assistance.
JLC 2019-06 <i>VMSDEP</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly remove the requirement that a veteran's disability rating be combat related. Instead, a permanent service-connected disability rating of at least 90%, plus satisfaction of the other requirements currently in the Code, would qualify a veteran's spouse or child for VMSDEP benefits.
JLC 2019-07 Phased-in System for Partial State Tax Exemption for Military Retirement Income	That the Governor and General Assembly support changes to the current Virginia tax laws for a phased in system to reduce state tax on military retirement income up to \$40,000.



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF
VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

101 N. 14TH ST, 17TH FLOOR
RICHMOND VA 23219

*Air Force Association
American Legion
AMVETS
Association of the United
States Army
Disabled American
Veterans
Fifth Baptist Veterans
Ministry
Fleet Reserve Association
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans
of America
Korean War Veterans
Association
Legion of Valor of the
U.S., Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Order of the
Purple Heart
Military Officers Association
of America
Military Order of the
World Wars
Navy Mutual Aid Association
Navy Seabee Veterans of
America
Non-Commissioned
Officers Association
Paralyzed Veterans of
America
Reserve Officers Association
Roanoke Valley Veterans
Council
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of America
Virginia Army/Air National
Guard Enlisted
Association
Virginia National Guard
Association
Women Marines Association*

DATE

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Position Paper 2019-01
Increased State Active Duty (SAD) Pay

OBJECTIVE: To raise minimum State Active Duty (SAD) pay for all Guardsmen to the equivalent of a service member with the rank of E-6 (Staff Sergeant) with 18 years of service, which is currently just over \$125 per day.

BACKGROUND:

- a. During state emergencies, Guardsmen are brought onto SAD as temporary state employees at a very low pay band.
- b. Other state employees involved in emergency response work overtime and go home or to a hotel, however, Guardsmen on SAD are not eligible for overtime pay, put in 12-18 hours per day, and are typically quartered in austere conditions such as an armory or tent.
- c. Since January 2014, the VNG has mobilized nearly 2,570 personnel on state active duty to respond to hurricanes, winter storms and flooding. Guardsmen are often given only 12 hours to report for SAD.

DISCUSSION:

- a. During the Charlottesville "Unite the Right" Protests in August 2017, Guardsmen stood side-by-side to Virginia State Police in extremely stressful and challenging conditions, however, compared to the state police pay of about \$147.63/day, VNG E-3s were paid about \$95.82 per day before taxes, which on a 12-hour shift is .48 cents above the federal minimum wage. E-1s earn about \$89.75 per day, before taxes, which on a 12-hour shift is less than the federal minimum wage (\$7.50/hour).
- b. Guardsmen often lose pay while on state active duty, and are forced to use vacation time or take leave without pay. Most employers do not supplement the pay difference.
- c. It is essential that Guardsmen are compensated at a reasonable rate, at least comparable to minimum wage, with a set pay floor. SAD pay amounts are determined by DOD pay tables.
- d. It is essential to promote a positive work environment when conducting SAD missions to send the message to Guardsmen that their efforts are valued equally to other emergency response agencies.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly appropriate \$50,000 to ensure that all Virginia National Guardsmen fairly compensated.

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Position Paper 2019-02 Income Tax Subtraction for Certain Low-Income 100% Disabled Veterans

OBJECTIVE: To allow individual income tax subtraction for the amount of annual retirement compensation received for service as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, or the Virginia National Guard, for 100% service-connected disabled veterans with a federal adjusted gross income not exceeding 150% of the federal poverty level for a four-person household. No subtraction would be permitted if another Virginia subtraction or deduction for such service has been claimed.

BACKGROUND:

- Virginia currently allows qualifying taxpayers to claim a subtraction for up to \$20,000 of disability income. Any disabled veterans who already claim this subtraction would not qualify for the new program, or would have to drop this subtraction and claim the new one.
- 14 states with an income tax exempt military retirement pay. Virginia's neighbors:
 - D.C. and Maryland offer exemptions ranging from \$3,000 to \$5,000.
 - North Carolina offers a full exemption for retirees with five years of service as of August 12, 1989; otherwise, retirees may claim a deduction of up to \$4,000.
 - Kentucky offers exemptions of \$41,110 and West Virginia \$20,000.

DISCUSSION:

- While Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) is not subject to federal or Virginia taxation, Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payments (CRDP) are generally subject to both federal and Virginia taxation.
- Available reports do not provide specific data on the exact number of 100% service-connected disabled veterans in Virginia, however, the VA has given a reasonable estimate of 1,371 disabled Virginia veterans who would qualify for this benefit.
- Department of Taxation considers implementation of this bill as routine, and does not require additional funding.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly approve an individual income tax subtraction for 100% service-connected disabled veterans with a federal adjusted gross income, not exceeding 150% of the federal poverty level for a four-person household, who have not already claimed another exemption.

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Position Paper 2019-03 Electronic Return of Voted Ballots by Overseas Military

OBJECTIVE: Enfranchise Virginia's Overseas Uniformed Service Personnel's votes by enacting Electronic Return of Voted Absentee Ballots by encrypted means or through special secure web access portal, as a pilot program.

BACKGROUND:

- a. Currently an overseas voter can electronically register and receive an absentee ballot per the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). By current Virginia Code the ballot must be returned via "snail" mail.
- b. Mail from overseas is subject to delays when returned by "snail" mail. Many votes are not counted due to ballots reaching local registrars after Election Day, if at all.
- c. For 2010-2014 general elections, deployed Virginians requested 5,050 ballots, of which 2,231 (44%) were returned by mail or in person in time to be counted, 134 ballots were rejected and not counted, and 2,675 (53%) were not returned.
- d. In 2018, Senate Bill 559 passed the Senate, but was tabled in the House.

DISCUSSION:

- a. Virginia is one of only 19 states that do not offer any kind of electronic return for its resident military members deployed overseas.
- b. In 2018, Everyone Counts a U.S. founded and owned encrypted voting software company provided a Rough Order of Magnitude Cost Projection to install a secure pilot test program statewide for \$400,000 if run state-wide, but a limited pilot can be done for \$100,000. The company's software is platform independent and encrypted to secure the integrity of the submitted ballots.
- c. As indicated by the National Association of Counties, the Fiscal Year 2018 Federal Omnibus Spending bill 2018 allocated millions of dollars in grants to states for election cybersecurity.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly enact legislation and provide budget support of a pilot program at the Virginia State Board of Elections for \$100,000 and funding for one FTE, for a limited pilot program for the electronic return of absentee ballots by Virginia's deployed military service members.

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Position Paper 2019-04 Personal Property Tax Relief for Certain Disabled Veterans

OBJECTIVE: To create a unified, cohesive, system for personal property tax relief to certain disabled veterans in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

BACKGROUND:

- Virginia's Counties and Independent Cities currently have a patchwork system of personal property tax relief for veterans. Most offer no exemption, but among those that do, which veterans qualify and how much relief – partial or full – the veteran can receive varies widely.
- This creates confusion and distress among veterans who move from a locality with personal property tax relief to a new locality that does not.
- The Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Department of Virginia has passed resolutions at the past two state conferences (Res 10, Res 19) calling for personal property tax exemption for one vehicle for veterans who qualify for the real property tax exemption.

DISCUSSION:

- As a Commonwealth, there is supposed to be uniform policies and tax exemptions.
- The Commissioners of the Revenue and other assessing officials are supportive of personal property tax exemption on one vehicle with the same requirements as the real property tax exemption.
- The requirements then would be for eligible veterans if they are 100% service-connected, total and permanently disabled veterans, as rated by the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs.
- This is another way to support low-income veterans, many of whom often risk losing their vehicle due to late payments and fines.
- The legislation would need to supercede current regulations passed at the county and city level to create one systematic policy for personal property tax exemptions in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly approve legislation creating a standardized, statewide personal property tax exemption for one vehicle for 100% service-connected, total and permanent disabled veterans.

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Position Paper 2019-05 Free Tuition for Virginia National Guardsmen

OBJECTIVE: To offer Virginia National Guardsmen free tuition at accredited Virginia colleges and universities, including community colleges, trade schools, and for-profit certification programs.

BACKGROUND:

- a. The Virginia National Guard (VNG) may miss end strength goals for the first time in more than a decade. National Guard leadership in Washington, D.C. made it clear that states who fail to meet strength goals will begin to lose force structure.
- b. VNG is losing recruits and current Virginia Guardsmen to surrounding states who offer free college tuition, including North Carolina, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania.
- c. Current VNG tuition assistance benefit comes with a 2-year service obligation and the benefit is only \$8,000 in state tuition assistance.

DISCUSSION:

- a. VNG has a significant presence and economic impact to Virginia, with facilities in over 40 communities valued at \$253M, and brings in more than \$250M in annual income, not including benefits.
- b. VNG maintains \$1.8B in equipment for state emergency response and federal training.
- c. Loss of force structure means loss of equipment, facilities, and personnel dollars to the Commonwealth, and lost opportunity to pursue increased force structure, which is a current priority for The Adjutant General.
- d. VNG is the tip of the spear with regard to cutting edge weapons systems and force structure, and are positioned to grow even more, but cannot do so without meeting end strength goals.
- e. The additional money spent on state tuition assistance comes back to Virginia through additional funds spent at Virginia's colleges, universities, and other continuing education courses, increased salaries (higher tax brackets), and most importantly not only skilled soldiers but skilled workers participating in Virginia's economy.
- f. Free tuition serves as a strong recruiting and retention incentive. Since Guardsmen are less transient than active duty, they are much more likely to go to school, work, live, shop, and enjoy leisure activities within the Commonwealth. Most settle permanently in Virginia.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly provide budget support of approximately a \$1 million increase in the annual State Tuition Assistance program for a pilot program to cover the estimated 3.5% of Guardsmen seeking a degree who are not currently completely covered by federal and state tuition assistance.

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Position Paper 2019-06

Removing the Combat Requirement for the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program [VMSDEP]

OBJECTIVE: To change eligibility for higher education benefits under the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP).

BACKGROUND:

- a. The VMSDEP, formally known as the War Orphans Education Program, provides education benefits to spouses and children of military service members killed, missing in action, taken prisoner, or who became at least 90 percent disabled as a result of military service in an armed conflict.
- b. Military service includes service in the United States Armed Forces, United States Armed Forces Reserves, and the Virginia National Guard.
- c. Armed conflict includes military operations against terrorism or as the result of a terrorist act, a peace-keeping mission, or any armed conflict after Dec. 6, 1941.
- d. Under VMSDEP, tuition and required fees are waived at Virginia public colleges and universities.
- e. Students may also receive a stipend of up to \$1,800 per year toward the cost of room, board, books, and supplies. The amount of the stipend is dependent on the amount of funding appropriated (\$1,930,000 in FY16), the number of enrolled students, and their enrollment status.
- f. Benefits are available for up to four years or the equivalent.

DISCUSSION:

- a. Under current law, the veteran's 90% disability rating must have incurred during military operations against terrorism, on a peacekeeping mission, as a result of a terrorist act, or in any armed conflict.
- b. In 2015, DVS denied 502 applicants due to the combat requirement.
- c. The 2016 FIS for SB528 estimated the proposed legislation would result in a system-wide loss of tuition revenue of \$2,182,454 in FY17 and \$2,520,734 in FY18.
- d. This is a potentially significant fiscal impact on higher education institutions, and additional general fund support may need to be appropriated to offset this loss of revenue. Evaluation may show whether funding from other programs such as the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant Program and the Virginia Community College Tuition Grant for Foster Care could potentially offset the increased cost to VMSDEP.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly remove the requirement that a veteran's disability rating be combat related and within an armed conflict. Instead, a permanent, service-connected disability rating of at least 90%, plus satisfaction of the other requirements currently in the Code, would qualify a veteran's spouse or child for VMSDEP benefits.

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Dec. 20, 2017

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Position Paper 2019-07

Phased-in System for Partial State Tax Exemption for Military Retirement Income

OBJECTIVE: To reform the Virginia state tax law, creating a phased in system to exempt a portion of military retirement income beginning in 2019.

BACKGROUND:

- Currently Virginia does not exempt military retirement income, while three of Virginia's neighbors (NC, WV, MD) have some level of state tax exemption on military retirement income.
- The personal income tax laws of over half the states provides various exclusions from gross income in determining tax liability, including an exclusion for combat-related special compensation and death benefit payments received by a surviving spouse or other beneficiary designated by a military veteran.

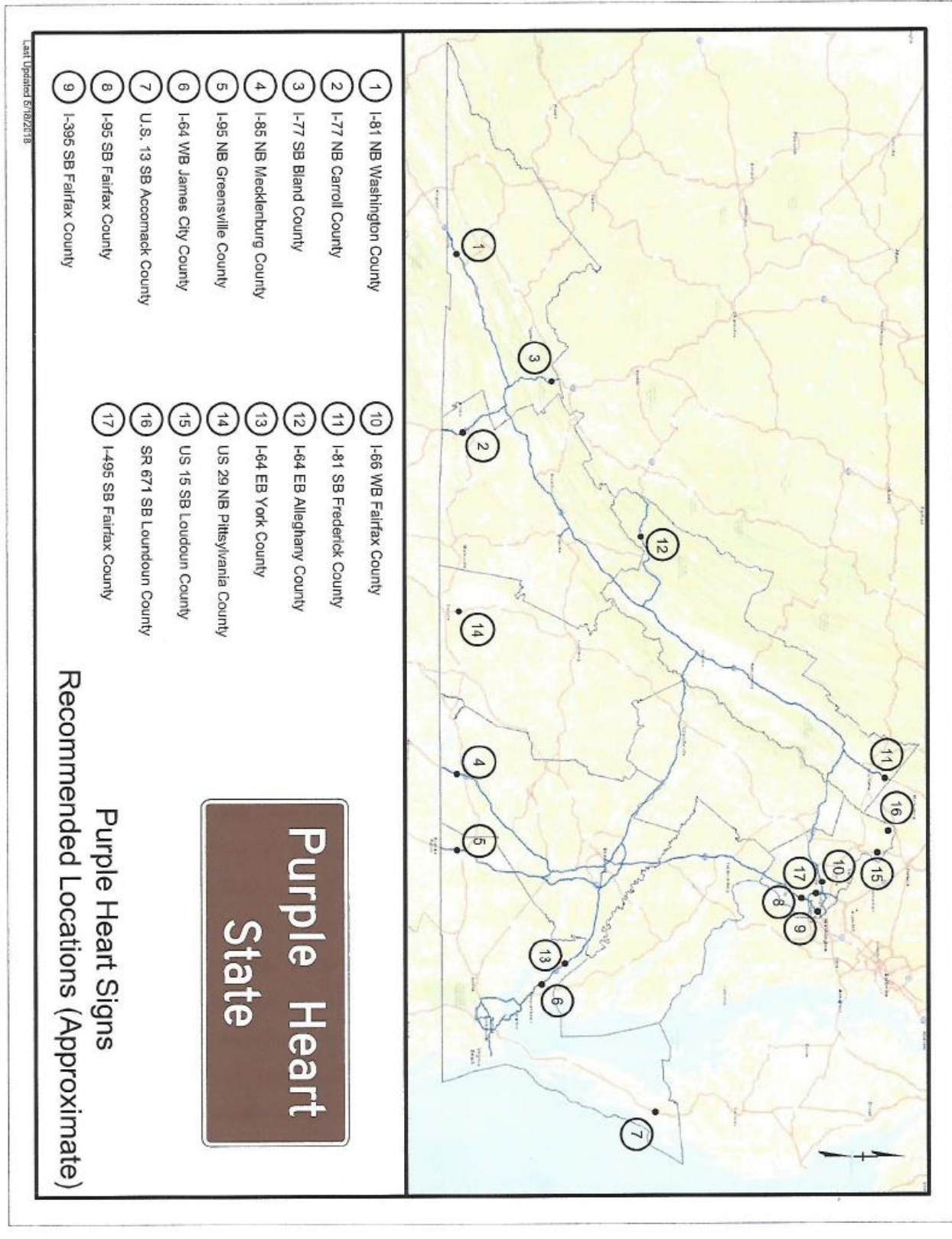
DISCUSSION:

- Non-military income, including all income derived from federal or military contracts, consulting or full-time employment will be taxed at the full gross income percentages.
- The qualifying retirement income must be received as a result of an honorable discharge and retirement from full-time, active-duty service in the armed forces of the United States, or reserve components thereof, including the National Guard.
- For each taxable year beginning on or after January 1, 2019 gross income shall not include a percentage of qualified military retirement income for retirees who are 65 years of age or older and qualified taxpayers. The phased in system would:
- Beginning in 2019: A military retiree may subtract \$10,000 of their military retirement income from federally adjusted gross income before determining Virginia tax.
- Beginning in 2021: A military retiree may subtract \$20,000 of their military retirement income from federally adjusted gross income before determining Virginia tax.
- Beginning in 2023: A military retiree may subtract \$30,000 of their military retirement income from federally adjusted gross income before determining Virginia tax.
- Beginning in 2025: A military retiree may subtract \$40,000 of their military retirement income from federally adjusted gross income before determining Virginia tax.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Governor and General Assembly support changes to the current Virginia tax laws for a phased in system to reduce state tax on military retirement income up to \$40,000.

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ATTACHMENT 8 **Military Order of the Purple Heart – Purple Heart State signage**



ATTACHMENT 9
Handouts from George Mason's Veterans & the Arts Initiative



Veterans and the Arts Initiative

The *Veterans and the Arts Initiative* brings Veterans, Servicemembers, their families, and military caregivers to the Hylton Performing Arts Center at George Mason University to engage with the arts. The intended benefit of the *Veterans and the Arts Initiative* is to facilitate community engagement, establish strong connections to the arts, encourage a sense of purpose through active participation, and support social relationships.

**Upcoming Highlights for
2018 – 2019 Community Programs:**

Workshops and special events, including –

- Dominion Energy Veterans Guitar Workshop Series in Fall 2018 and Spring 2019
- Guitar/Ukulele Workshop at the Virginia War Memorial on Sunday, October 21, 2018 at 2pm
- Songwriting Series for Military Children in Fall 2018
- Veterans History Project Lecture and Interview Workshop – collaboration of the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress, Marine Corps Base Quantico Volunteer Program, Lifelong Learning Institute Manassas, and the Veterans and the Arts Initiative in Fall 2018
- Visual Art Workshop Series – dot painting workshops led by Martin J. Cervatez, USA (Ret.) and printmaking and papermaking workshops led by Patrick Sargent, USAF (Ret.) in Spring 2019
- Celebrating Veterans and the Arts at the Hylton Center – annual celebration featuring community-based resources, interactive arts workshops, and a concert



Research Agenda

- Veterans and the Arts Initiative Workshops - Longitudinal ethnographic study of the intergenerational workshops to derive baseline characteristics, including qualitative and quantitative data, of those who are interested in community engagement through arts interventions
- Collaboration with the Sport Medicine Assessment Research and Testing (SMART) Laboratory at George Mason University - Community-engaged project studying the effects of arts programs on quality of life, physical performance, and perceptions of self in older adults



Selected Presentations

- Panelist in the Creative Forces National Capital Region Summit in May 2018
- Co-presenter in the "Music and Aging From Bench to Intervention" Symposium at the Gerontological Society of America's 70th Annual Scientific Meeting

The Veterans and the Arts Initiative is overseen by Dr. Niyati Dhokai, Program Manager of Veterans and the Arts Initiative and Research Assistant Professor in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, and Ms. Shamala Capizzi, Program Assistant of the Veterans and the Arts Initiative and USMC Veteran. For more information about the Veterans and the Arts Initiative, please contact Dr. Dhokai at ndhokai2@gmu.edu or Ms. Capizzi at scapizzi@gmu.edu.

Fall 2018 Veterans and the Arts Initiative Events



VETERANS COMMUNITY ART WORKSHOP

Presented by Martin J. Cervantez, Master Sergeant, USA (Ret.)

Saturday, September 8 from 1–3 p.m.

Join us, and members of the Mason Veteran Patriots, for a community art project—no prior art experience is necessary, and supplies for the workshop will be provided. **The event is FREE and open to Veterans, Servicemembers, their families, and military caregivers. All participants should be 14 years of age or older; children 9 years of age and older may participate alongside an adult family member.**

SONGWRITING SERIES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

Presented by the Center for American Military Music Opportunities (C*A*M*M*O) and the Hylton Center Veterans and the Arts Initiative

Saturdays, September 22, October 6; October 20 from 1–3 p.m.

Join us for this three-part series of music and songwriting - no prior experience is necessary. Create your own song during the series and share it at Celebrating Veterans and the Arts at the Hylton Center on November 10. **The workshop series is FREE and open to military children between the ages of 8 and 17. Space is limited.**

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT LECTURE AND INTERVIEW WORKSHOP

Presented by the Library of Congress Veterans History Project, Marine Corps Base Quantico Volunteer Program, Lifelong Learning Institute Manassas, and the Hylton Center Veterans and the Arts Initiative.

Friday, October 26 from 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 27 from 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Join us on October 26 or October 27 for a lecture on the Veterans History Project and to participate in an interview. The lecture is free and open to all from 10 a.m.–11:15 a.m. Veterans must register to participate in interviews that will be conducted by Servicemembers and Veterans from 11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m. **Space for interviews is limited.**

CELEBRATING VETERANS AND THE ARTS AT THE HYLTON CENTER

Saturday, November 10 from 4–7 p.m.; 8 p.m. concert

Join us for an interactive afternoon of celebration and arts experiences for Veterans, Servicemembers, their families, military caregivers, and the community. This FREE event kicks off its fourth year at the Hylton Center and features community-based resources, interactive music and visual art workshops, an exhibition of Veteran artwork, and more! The free activities will be followed by a family-friendly ticketed 8 p.m. performance by country music artist William Michael Morgan, with an opening performance by artists from the Center for American Military Music Opportunities (C*A*M*M*O). **This concert is FREE to Veterans, Servicemembers, their families, and military caregivers; \$20 for the general public.**

Presenting Sponsor: Azalea Charities, Inc.,
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Information and registration at HyltonCenter.org/veterans.